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**PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Alaska National Guard

By Staff Sgt. N. Alicia Halla
176th Wing Public Affairs

Alaska Guardsmen participate in WWII veterans' Honor Flight program with Alaska Airlines

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska —About 45 Guardsmen from the Alaska Air National Guard's 176th Wing assisted nearly 50 World War II veterans at the Ted Stevens International Airport in preparation for their May 6 flight to Washington, D.C., as part of the Honor Flight Network program.

The veterans, who hail from across Alaska, traveled to the nation's capital to visit for the first time the memorials erected in their honor. The flight was sponsored by Alaska Airlines and arranged by the Golden Heart and Last Frontier Honor Flight programs — regional divisions of the national organization.

A few of the veterans were members of the Alaska Territorial Guard, a federally recognized militia during the occupation of Alaska in World War II from 1942-1947.

"It was an amazing day hanging out with all those heroes," said Master Sgt. Mark Eaker, 176th Operations Group aviation resource management superintendent. "I have 21 years in the military, and that was the coolest thing I've done."

This trip is the second honor flight to go out of Alaska onboard Alaska Airlines, which provided tickets for the veterans and discounts to their guardians.

"The state of Alaska has a proud military history," said Marilyn Romano, Alaska Airlines regional vice president - Alaska. "We're honored to fly these brave men and women to Washington to pay their respects to those who gave the ultimate sacrifice for our country."

The veterans, who return to Anchorage tomorrow, will be met by a public reception at the Ted Stevens International Airport at 12:30 p.m. Groups from the community including local ROTCs, a bag pipe band, and Alaska National Guardsmen are scheduled to welcome the heroes home.

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Photo cutlines follow

Photo cutlines

140506-Z-DU133-001 & 140506-Z-DU133-002

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska - About 45 Guardsmen of the Alaska Air National Guard's 176th Wing assisted and interacted with nearly 50 World War II veterans at the Ted Stevens International Airport on May 6. The Alaska veterans were on their way to visit their monuments in Washington, D.C., for the first time thanks to organizations such as the Golden Heart and Last Frontier Honor Flight programs and Alaska Airlines, which provided the veterans tickets. U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. N. Alicia Halla/Released.

140506-Z-CA180-001 & 140506-Z-CA180-009

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska - About 45 Guardsmen of the Alaska Air National Guard's 176th Wing assisted and interacted with nearly 50 World War II veterans at the Ted Stevens International Airport on May 6. The Alaska veterans were on their way to visit their monuments in Washington, D.C., for the first time thanks to organizations such as the Golden Heart and Last Frontier Honor Flight programs and Alaska Airlines, which provided the veterans tickets. U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Balinda O'Neal/Released.